



Taobao Maker Festival Returns with Immersive Mega Treasure Hunt to Champion Creativity and Entrepreneurship

China's first ever large-scale fantasy scavenger hunt shines a spotlight on new and niche products

Shanghai, China, July 16, 2021 – Alibaba Group (NYSE: BABA and HKEX: 9988) is ready to kick off its sixth Taobao Maker Festival (“TMF”) this weekend.

This year’s Taobao Maker Festival welcomes more than 100 Taobao merchants from across different categories. Following last year’s event, which was moved partially online in response to the pandemic, the upcoming gala will ramp up its immersive in-person experiences at the National Convention and Exhibition Center in Shanghai from July 17 to 25.

Themed “The Lost Treasure,” the festival will be the first in China to feature a large-scale scavenger hunt with clues and puzzles spread across multiple zones in a 30,000-square-meter expo.

“Taobao Maker Festival champions creativity and entrepreneurship,” said **Chris Tung, Chief Marketing Officer of Alibaba Group**. “To support creators and merchants on the platform, the event comes back this year with a gamified fantasy experience inspired by the Tang Dynasty to give visitors a fun and interactive way to explore the premises while perusing products from Taobao’s most innovative storefronts.”

More Innovations to Discover

Taobao Maker Festival aims to shine a spotlight on hidden gems, especially new or niche products that address the wants and needs of China’s savvy young shoppers. Featured items reflect the creativity and trendsetting power of Taobao and range from unique handicrafts and fashion-forward items to culture-inspired creations and futuristic tech-driven inventions.

Guests at this year’s event can also enjoy the works of eight contemporary Chinese artists, whose explorations of culture and technology demonstrate the boundless possibilities of creative expression. Bringing a new dimension to the festival, these avant-garde pieces include a traditional Chinese landscape painting created with AI technology and sculptures crafted with the soundwaves from thousands of years ago.

More Support for Young Entrepreneurs

Taobao has long been a favorite platform for China's young creators and entrepreneurs, with the average age of new merchants being 26 years old. For the 12 months ended March 2021, the number of new active merchants on Taobao was the highest in the five years since 2017.

By upgrading its popular Taobao Maker Festival awards into a rating system, Taobao has been able to provide year-long support to young entrepreneurs who showcase outstanding originality and creativity. Launched last year, the rating system has helped drive exposure and success for niche merchants by featuring their products in the platform's "Good Find" personalized product recommendation section. As of June 2021, rated merchants have outperformed the average sales growth of China's overall online retail market.

Recognized businesses have also used Taobao's tools and resources to further fuel their growth. Among these are independent designers focused on vintage clothing or tie-dye menswear and shops that specialize in insect-shaped brass gadgets, artisanal inks or personalized pet supplies. According to Taobao, the rate at which these aforementioned sellers published content on *Guangguang*, Taobao's built-in short-video channel, was 33 times that of the market average. Meanwhile, their frequency of leveraging livestreaming or posting about products on their subscription-based channels was 12 times that of regular merchants.

Taobao is committed to helping young entrepreneurs better connect with more than 925 million active users across Alibaba's China retail marketplaces and setting them up for long-term success. Aside from bringing merchants more exposure with events such as Taobao Maker Festival, since March, Taobao has introduced a series of new measures to lower its entry barriers, expedite its onboarding process and reduce operational costs. It also launched its first "Merchant Growth System" initiative in May to give sellers of all backgrounds and sizes more transparent growth strategies and rights protection guidelines.

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About Taobao Marketplace

Launched in 2003, Taobao Marketplace (www.taobao.com) provides consumers from both large cities and less developed areas with an engaging, personalized shopping experience, optimized by big-data analytics and technology. Through highly relevant and engaging content and real-time updates from merchants, consumers can learn about products and new trends. They can also interact with each other and their favorite merchants and key opinion leaders. Merchants on Taobao Marketplace are primarily individuals and small businesses. According to Analysys, Taobao Marketplace was China's leading mobile commerce destination with a large and growing social community, in terms of GMV for the 12 months ended March 31, 2020. Taobao Marketplace is a business of Alibaba Group.

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